

*British Museum Guides.*

1. *A Guide to the Exhibited Series of Insects.* Price 1s. 1908.

2. *Guide to the Gallery of Fishes.* Price 1s. 1908.

London : Printed by Order of the Trustees of the British Museum.

As popular text-books of zoology the guide-books sold over the counter of the Natural History Museum probably stand unrivalled, for they display a wealth of illustration which is truly marvellous, while it is certain that in the matter of concentrated information they hold an almost unique position.

The Guide to the Exhibited Series of Insects has been written by Mr. C. O. Waterhouse, and this in itself is a sufficient guarantee of sterling work.

After a brief introduction on the broad outlines of the structure of insects, the Author proceeds to pass in review all the principal orders and families into which this class is divided, illustrating his remarks by brief sketches of the more remarkable species, their life-history and habits. When we remember that Mr. Waterhouse has had to make this selection out of a possible 155,700 named species, the magnitude of his task becomes dimly realizable. Incidentally we may remark that the study collection now housed in the Museum contains about 1,150,000 specimens!

The Guide to the Fish Gallery has been written by Dr. W. G. Ridewood, and is in every way worthy of the great series of which it forms a part. The Author has devoted many years of study to the fishes, and to him, it may be remarked, Sir E. Ray Lankester, the late Director of the Museum, entrusted the rearrangement of the specimens with which this Guide is concerned. During this work Dr. Ridewood effected a marvellous transformation, and in the pages of this little volume he briefly traces, for the benefit of the visitor, all the more striking and interesting facts concerning the specimens so beautifully displayed. But beside this he has contrived to include a most helpful and concise account of the classification of fishes and the more important features in their anatomy, at any rate in so far as this bears upon their systematic position.

Those who have a mind, it may be remarked, to acquaint themselves with the last word in the classification of fishes may with profit consult the pages of this Guide, for many new features have been introduced into the systematic arrangement of this group during the work of remodelling the Gallery. Many of the orders and most of the subdivisions thereof which appear in this Guide will be found to be new—that is to say, a more or less reshuffling of the orders of other authors has taken place in order, if possible, to express the phylogenetic relationships of the groups concerned one to another. This, of course, will not meet with universal approval, no system of classification ever does; but it will certainly stimulate further work, and thus serve a most useful purpose.